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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: poverty eradication

Statement submitted by the Service and Research Institute on Family and Children, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2012/1.

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Statement

Today, more than ever, there can be no doubt that a nation can be judged by the state of its families.

In the context of the overarching theme, Poverty eradication, it needs to be recognized that poverty in families and societies are dialectical phenomena because both the family systems and social systems are interrelated.

While the individual-centred approach is noteworthy and social protection is recognized as a priority, the basic and first level of protection lies in and with the family, and then with the larger social system. It needs to be recognized that over the years of social development the family has been the missing link between individuals and their social settings. The centrality of the family and its pivotal role in poverty eradication and social protection cannot be minimized or overlooked. Stable family life enables the individual person to grow into adulthood and become a productive person in society.

Dysfunctional family life or broken families do impinge on the economic well-being of a nation. In brief, the basic functions of nurturing and caring cannot be adequately performed or taken over by social institutions because the elementary support systems are not present. All that social institutions need to do/can do is to provide the necessary support mechanisms and facilities to enable the family to effectively carry out its functions of individual and social protection. This calls for innovative approaches that incorporate family-based approaches that build on the strengths that reside in the family and empower the family to effect solutions with appropriate social mechanisms.

Such an approach to the family is foundational, accessible, effective and can last over time. Such an approach calls on the United Nations and sovereign nation States:

(a) To establish family focal points and to ensure their visibility;

(b) To develop a charter of the rights of the family;

(c) To create effective integrating machinery for engaging in direct family-based approaches and social mandates built around the rights of the family;

(d) To agree to make "The family" the theme for the 2013-2014 work cycle of the Commission.